

MOTION BY SUPERVISOR MARK RIDLEY-THOMAS

FEBRUARY 3, 2015

Preserving Trauma Care in South Los Angeles and Los Angeles County

On September 23, 2014, the Board of Supervisors (Board) sent a five-signature letter to the Attorney General of the State of California expressing its concern regarding the pending sale of the non-profit St. Francis Medical Center in Lynwood to a for-profit entity. St. Francis Medical Center provides critical health services, including a significant amount of charity care, emergency, Level II trauma and behavioral health care services to a large underserved community in southeast Los Angeles.

Since then, the Attorney General and Los Angeles County's (County) Department of Health Services (DHS) have both released reports confirming the crucial role St. Francis Medical Center plays as one of the busiest trauma centers in the County's trauma care system.

A December 24, 2014 report by the Attorney General's consultants, Medical Development Specialists, describes various essential life-saving services provided by St. Francis Medical Center that other nearby hospitals do not have the capacity to provide. The report also summarizes stakeholder concerns about the proposed buyer's level of community commitment given its operational decisions at other facilities.

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MOTION

SOLIS _____

RIDLEY-THOMAS _____

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ANTONOVICH _____

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A January 8, 2015 report by DHS confirms that, “the loss of any service at [Saint Francis Medical Center], most notably the trauma service, would be a tremendous loss to the community and have far reaching negative consequences” (p. 4). The loss of geographic availability of trauma services would impact more than just the residents of the south and southeast communities of the County. It would lead to increased diversion to other trauma care centers for other residents countywide, leading to increased wait times and overcrowding.

A related January 20, 2015 DHS report found the new private non-profit MLK Community Hospital -- set to open later this year – could not fill any trauma care service delivery gap without a significant service expansion and financial investment for additional hospital staff and infrastructure, including the construction of new inpatient beds and operating rooms. Even then, it would take years to meet various trauma certification and licensing requirements once any new construction was completed.

The Board has urged the Attorney General to exercise her broad discretion to condition any sale on a requirement that the buyer maintain all services currently provided by the hospital, including Level II trauma care. The Attorney General is expected to issue her decision by February 20, 2015.

Regardless of the Attorney General’s action, it is critical that the County continue to explore all alternatives to ensure no disruption of trauma and other life-saving services occurs in the southeast Los Angeles area and that adequate trauma care services continue to be available Countywide.

Measure B is a special parcel tax that leverages funds to preserve trauma centers, emergency medical services, and bioterrorism responses. On January 20, 2015, the Board approved a motion by Supervisors Antonovich and Solis directing DHS to analyze the impact of the Affordable Care Act on the allocation of Measure B trauma program funds.

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THEREFORE I MOVE THAT THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

Direct the Director of the Department of Health Services to report back in 21 days in writing on options to use Measure B and other funds to avoid any disruption of trauma, emergency, behavioral health and other critical health services in Los Angeles County at risk of reduction as a result of the proposed sale of St. Francis Medical Center. The report back should consider changes to the Measure B program, Board of Supervisors pursuit of another ballot measure, or other legislation to ensure adequate trauma, emergency, and behavioral health services continue to exist throughout Los Angeles County.

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